

ANTI-DETAILED CONDUCTION SIGNS

(Unity-Diversity II, conduction version). For ensemble ad lib, may be large.

BASIC VERSION:

Sometimes improvisors gather around one kind of sound, regardless whether it's one kind of texture, of melodic movement, of a special timbre, or around one pitch - whether loud or soft: that's unity. At other times, it's fun to hear a lot of contrasting, individual phenomena in the air: that's diversity.

The conductor's role here is to listen and make sure these possibilities are discovered and explored. This is done by occasionally showing a sign. Signs are always given to the whole group, never to individuals or sub-groups. Before showing it, he/she may raise both hands for some time to secure the attention of all. Everything else is free.

Signs should be given only now and then. Standing before the ensemble is a kind of sign in itself. Conductor may indicate coherent periods of non-influencing by sitting down. Resist temptations to influence details, stay neutral in mimics and other gestures. Even better than having one conductor, however, would be to allow each ensemble member one sign during one playing process or another collective arrangement.
 - On how to specify unity and diversity in practise, see Unity-Diversity I for ideas.

NAME	MORE UNITY	MORE DIVERSITY
THUMBNAIL (picture)		
GESTURE	Conductor points fingers towards each other	Conductor points fingers away from each other
MEANING	Seek unity, gradually	Seek diversity, gradually

ADVANCED VERSION:

NAME	THINK FOR A MOMENT	MORE PAUSES	VARY DYNAMICS	REFRESH
THUMBNAIL (picture)				
GESTURE	Fingers touching the head	Finger before mouth	Hand shown with fingers apart	Big half-circle movement with one hand
MEANING	Think and feel free to maybe change something (or pause)	Less is more!	Dynamics are too predictable - vary them! Also individually!	Try something different!

The conductor can have some signs in addition to the two first ones that might add a twist. "Think for a moment" - don't do anything specific, but if you find it could be time to change something (or pause!), feel free to do so according to your own idea. "More pauses" - to counteract congestion of sound. "Vary dynamics" - discover this parameter instead of predictable collective ups and downs - could there be more loud and soft together (don't just play louder when you see this sign, maybe you need to do the opposite). "Refresh" - to get on if it's stuck or simply, more variation.

These signs were made as an attempted alternative to conducting systems that tend to fix details and lead to rather monophonic textures. Instead, there is an endeavour to encourage the polyphonic diversity of the ensemble/orchestra, and the intuitive, irrational dimensions of playing.